

SCHOOL BOARD ACTION

Date: November 3, 2004 DRAFT

To: School Board

From: Raj Manhas, Superintendent

Introduction: November 17, 2004

Action: December 1, 2004

Re: Board Policy on Drinking Water Quality Improvement Program

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend approval of the following motion:

I move that the Seattle School Board adopt Policy No. E10.00 and Board Procedure E10.01, Drinking Water Quality and Access, establishing standards for drinking water quality and access. It is further moved (1) that the Superintendent report not later than March 10, 2005 on plans to implement the policy; (2) that the School Board establish a Drinking Water Quality Improvement Program Oversight Committee by February 10, 2005, whose purpose shall be to oversee and report to the School Board on implementation of this policy and procedure and to recommend changes and additional actions as appropriate; and (3) that the Superintendent include in future levy proposals to the Board appropriate funding for water quality projects to assure the District invests funding to assure long term compliance with the policy.

DISCUSSION

The Policy and Legislation Committee has developed a policy and procedure addressing the issue of the quality of the drinking water in school buildings and assuring access to safe water for all students and staff.

EPA requirements for school drinking water cover lead, but do not cover any other requirements. The Procedure goes farther than the EPA standard for lead, by lowering the limit from 20 parts per billion (ppb) to 10 ppb, in order to provide added confidence that the EPA standard is met on a daily basis. The Procedure also adopts standards for both other important characteristics: cadmium, copper, coliform bacteria and iron, based on standards applicable to public water systems. In each case these standards are in compliance with or exceed regulatory requirements and the advice of the state and county boards of health.

The Procedure also sets standards for minimum access to ample quantities of water. The staff will conduct a location-by-location analysis of each school, determining whether to fix each noncompliant fountain and sink and to disable them if they are not necessary and provide bottled water if they are.

Plans are being made to implement the policy. Near term efforts include (1) installation of new filters and fixtures to bring all sources in the 37 buildings currently on regular service in compliance with the lead standard of 10 ppb, by approximately January 31, 2005 and (2) testing for iron to determine the efforts necessary to achieve compliance by August 31, 2005; (3) design activities for major efforts during summer 2005; (4) planning for long term activities to achieve compliance with the Policy and Procedure..

The procedure also requires implementation of a regular repeat testing program and reporting of test results on the district website and to parents, staff and students.

Because of the extensive effort which will be required to comply with the new policy and procedure, and the high public interest in this issue, the motion provides for the School Board to create a Water Quality Improvement Program Oversight Committee. The purpose of the committee shall be to oversee and report to the School Board on implementation of this policy at least semi-annually (and more often as appropriate). The Committee will be appointed and commence work by early February, 2005. The Executive Director of Facilities will provide appropriate staff support to the Committee.

The fiscal impact of this policy and procedure will be addressed through amendments to the capital budget, which will be submitted separately. The motion calls for long term planning to upgrade school drinking water systems on a regular basis as part of future levy programs, so that a program can be established to replace building piping systems which are deteriorating.

ATTACHMENT

Draft Policy and Procedure

Staff: _____
Ron English